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A SHORT  
STATEMENT  
OF  
FACTS,  
WITH  
SOME REFLECTIONS;

OCCASIONED BY  
A PAMPHLET,  
ENTITLED  
“*The Plain Thoughts of a Plain Man.*”

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BY A REAL PLAIN MAN.

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LONDON:  
PRINTED FOR J. DEBRET, OPPOSITE BURLINGTON-HOUSE,  
PICCADILLY.  
M,DCC,XCVII.

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"The Plain Thoughts of a Plain Man"

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## STATEMENT OF FACTS,

&c.

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**A**T a time when so much has already been said upon public affairs, it is a bold attempt in any person to intrude himself on the public, who has never been accustomed to communicate his thoughts further than his private correspondence required, which does not demand either elegance of diction, or such a precision and correctness on the subject treated on as is requisite in that which must be exposed to the animadversions of every one.

It will easily be seen, that, in publishing the following pages, I do not aim at literary fame, and this is the only reason for my not having subscribed my name to them, though I should not hesitate to avow the principles and assertions contained herein before any man whose opinion I most regard.

I am prompted to this step by "*The Plain Thoughts of a Plain Man*," who wishes to give a

direction to the opinion of that most respectable part of the community, whose daily employment does not permit them to bestow much time and reflection on public affairs. It will be easily perceived that he is not *so plain* a man as he pretends to appear; for the spirit of party, that breathes in every line of his pamphlet, convinces one, that he looks up to some reward from those Ministers whose measures he so strenuously supports.

Thank God, the time of delusion is passing away, and the set of men he addresses are no longer to be led astray by speculative ideas or false statements of facts. Their judgment, on a given point, is more to be depended upon than that of those who are called the higher order of society, because there is amongst them a greater share of good sense, more honesty, and better morals. Their mind is divested of all that incumbrance of useless knowledge, which we call fashionable education, and their judgment is under constant good regulation, by their attention to the proper objects of their daily occupations; and to tell them, that the supporting of, and continuing their confidence in, the present administration, will be productive of the greatest good, is to tell them that the rain, the light, and the sun, are not necessary to vegetation, and that their farms will yield the same  
produce





produce without work and attention, as they do with all their care and labour.

Very exact method in the following sheets is not to be expected ; but truth and plain reasoning I pledge myself to keep constantly in view.

It is needless to talk of the causes of the French Revolution ; but the object before me requires me to say, that its beginning met with the spontaneous approbation of every noble and generous mind in Europe ; and (much to the honour of the British people) in no country more than in this : and I may venture to add, that, had not the late unfortunate King of France been surrounded by bad counsellors, that Revolution, as it might possibly have been the best, so it might also have been the most peaceable that is recorded in the annals of the world ; and that monarch, like our's, might now have reigned over a free people. But he signed his fate by his sanction of the treaty of Pilnitz, which we are taught to believe was accomplished under his auspices, and foreboded all the calamities that we now behold.

Though we might not have been a party immediately concerned in it, he must be but a shallow politician who will venture to assert that we were ignorant of it, and that we did not, at least tacitly, consent thereto. I mention this as leading to a demon-

monstration that our administration were deceiving their country, when they boasted and asserted in both Houses of Parliament, in the latter end of the year 1792, that they did not mean to interfere in the interior affairs of France.

The great popularity which Mr. Pitt has maintained during this war, originated in his persuading the country that it was just and unavoidable. You shall judge of his sincerity by the following statement of facts :—In the same year, at the time he so solemnly declared his wish of maintaining his neutrality, in the month of November, proposals were dispatched from this cabinet to the Emperor of Germany and King of Prussia, towards a treaty for joining our forces for the prosecution of the war against France, which must of course have been in deliberation, long before that time, in the cabinet. Mr. Pitt, too confident of that offer being received with eagerness, in the interim laid his memorable embargo on grain, to the infraction of the then existing treaty of commerce, and brought on us the French declaration of war. But, behold ! after having waited with uncommon impatience, beyond the usual time, for their answer, it at last arrived ; and nothing could exceed the uneasiness and surprise of our ministers, when they read in substance, that his Imperial Majesty and the King of Prussia had no great objection to enter into the said treaty, provided



provided the Court of St. James's would guaranty to them the intended partition of Poland.

Mr. Pitt at that time thought such a step too impolitic to accede to, and returned for answer, that it was a measure he dared not, and would not, publicly countenance. However, they soon informed him, that whether he could or could not guaranty the said partition, it must, and would take place. It may be of some importance to observe, that in the above original letter, to the credit of Mr. Pitt's *humanity*, he mentions the possibility of bringing the French to passive obedience by starving them. Grotius (if he were alive) would bid him reflect on *that*, and lull his conscience to sleep as he could.

The public is too well acquainted with the consequences of the above for it to be necessary for me to enlarge much on it: therefore, without mentioning, in this place, the impolicy of the war, I shall just observe the consequences that have resulted from the unskilful manner the minister got himself hurried into it by the above measures. Instead of being looked up to by the other powers already engaged, as an independent ally in the contest, he became principal. From hence have arisen all the ruinous subsidies we have been obliged to give to the Emperor, Kings, and Princes on the Continent; for the treaty now exist-

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ing between us and the Emperor was not concluded till August 1793. The following instance of his want of penetration and skill (not to say worse) is more remote in point of date, though not less interesting, as it tends to prove that our administration entered into the war in the most deliberate and premeditated manner, by which impolicy and want of faith England lost an opportunity of seizing such advantages as *nothing* but such a revolution in France could have produced for her. During the contention of parties in the National Assembly, for the establishment of their first constitution, the most respectable was that which was decidedly attached to Monarchy; but finding that the clouds thickened in the North in favour of the re-establishment of unlimited power in France, these great men turned their thoughts upon this country, as the quarter from whence (on account of the affinity of its Constitution) they should be most likely to meet with a favourable countenance. What I now say I have from a very respectable man employed in the transaction, that this party was headed by General La Fayette, and supported (amongst a great many others of the most enlightened men then in action) by the Mayor of Strasburg, Monsieur Dietrick, and his son, who possessed a most decided influence in Alsace, Lorraine, and all the north of France. They, foreseeing the very dangerous consequences of the intrigues then existing at their court, and anxiously wishing



wishing to consolidate the great work they had begun, actually opened a negotiation with Mr. Pitt, to induce him to acknowledge the constitution of a limited monarchy; for which they offered him, among other advantages, a treaty of commerce for ten or fifteen years, almost of his own dictating: he received the proposals favourably, and caused them to entertain hopes of their being brought publicly forward and accepted. However, Mr. Pitt, without assigning any reason, abruptly broke off his negotiation with them, and that party soon afterwards found itself overpowered; the consequence of which was, that La Fayette was obliged to fly from his command, and caused the total overthrow of this party. What has been, and what is still the fate of this General, every body is acquainted with; but that of the other two respectable men above mentioned, and the majority of their party, is not so well known. Both the father and son carried their virtues and unspotted characters to the scaffold, the rest of them are either dispersed in obscurity or destroyed. After this narrative no man can call this war *just* and *unavoidable*, and it fully answers for the treatment the French ambassadors, Messrs. Chauvelin and Maret, met with from the noble Secretary of State.

Let me now consider what reasons Mr. Pitt could have to forego the advantages such circumstances furnished him with, towards accomplishing

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his favourite plan of finance and economy, which the *plain man* talks of now with no less rapture and admiration than I then felt towards it myself. Men of any observation can easily conceive the objections that the Crown and the aristocratical part of this country must have to a parliamentary reform. By the aristocratical party, I mean every man that has, or expects to have, an influence in elections, or in either of the Houses of Parliament. We all remember, at the above period, the imposing spirit of the people in favour of the said reform, by which Mr. Pitt, seeing himself upon the eve of an obligatory compliance, devised means at all risks to divert the public attention from that object.

I must own, that I have my doubts as to the good effects of a parliamentary reform at present, for two substantial reasons: 1st, Because I see no appearance and disposition in the public mind to go the length it requires, so as to produce a benefit adequate to the probable mischief it might occasion, on account of the embarrassed situation of the state. The second naturally occurs from the first, that, in the circumstances we are in, it is dangerous to weaken too much the hands of government, and all the good required may be done by a little more patriotism and honesty in our rulers; and would they act as we have a right to expect, we should soon see our country reassume its former prosperity. At that time, if there is virtue enough



in our Parliament, they may, without any danger, restore our Constitution to its pristine purity and splendor; and this noble work must originate there.

From the just love of their Constitution, and commendable national prejudices, no people on earth are so easily governed as those of this country; and no man knows it better, or ever deceived them more completely, than Mr. Pitt. Well aware that the war he had premeditated would not be popular, he, out of his fertile brain, produced a *phantom*, upon whose forehead was written *Agrarian law* and *equality*; he sent it to stalk abroad in the public view, and told his countrymen that the land was covered with French emissaries, preaching revolution and anarchy amongst them; and that one half of the nation listened to them with complacency, and was disposed to second their endeavours. Wonderful to tell! this ridiculous and artful scheme succeeded beyond his most sanguine expectations. In consequence of this self-created alarm, we now see Mr. Pitt possessed of an unheard-of majority in both Houses, basking in the sunshine of unlimited power, and supported by the most unparalleled confidence this country ever bestowed on any minister; first telling the nation that we should *soon* be at Paris! then, that in three months we should see the *end* of the French system! then, that the French were *starving*! then, that

they were *bankrupt* ! then, that a *counter-revolution* was at hand ! In short, when I look at what has passed, I see a mountebank, in the midst of a market place, playing his tricks before a gaping crowd, and telling them, with an arch and sagacious countenance, “ *Now you shall see what you shall see.*”

Every man of common observation must have remarked, on how slight a thread hung all his hopes during this awful contest, while the same pernicious and unskilful hand united the thread again as often as it broke ; and, to the astonishment of his common sense, he must have seen, from the beginning to this day, that the same hand has led on from mistake to mistake, from error to error, and, which is still worse, from imposition to imposition, till it has at last brought us to a situation most critical and humiliating.

Had Mr. Pitt been that great politician we believed him to be, he *once* had an opportunity of accomplishing his gigantic project of dictating to France ; this was when Toulon was in our hands, Lyons in a state of insurrection, twenty-two departments in correspondence with each other to oppose that arbitrary act of Robespierre, the imprisonment of twenty-three deputies of the people : and when, according to Mr. Pitt's own words, “ there were near an hundred thousand men in arms in La Vendée ” against the then existing power in France.



France. But mark the ignorance with which he proceeded on this extraordinary occasion. Every one knows that Switzerland covers nearly one hundred and eighty miles of the most vulnerable frontiers of France, and that it is proximate to the then seat of discontent; also, that the principal cantons are governed by a pure aristocracy, therefore inimical to the French revolution; that the democratical cantons are most of them rigid Roman Catholics, entirely under the influence of their priests, and entertain to this day the most inveterate hatred against the present order of things in France; besides their having various incitements to it, needless to mention. But Mr. Pitt as a statesman ought to have known, that Switzerland depends on the other countries for one-third of its consumption of grain, &c. that its collective treasury would not have been equal for three months to the payment of such an army as would have been necessary for the circumstances in which they might have been involved; that the Swiss are short of ammunition and artillery, and also that they have always had, and now have reasons to be jealous of the House of Austria. which jealousy was by no means diminished, by their considerations of the system that crowned heads then acted upon.

I must thus far give Mr. Pitt credit for having *perceived* the advantages that would have resulted from such an addition of power to the coalition;  
but

but what did he do to obtain it? Through our ambassador Lord Robert Fitzgerald, he issued a manifesto, not in so *dragooning* a stile as that to the Grand Duke of Tuscany, but telling them in substance, "Swiss, you must go to war against these French men-eaters, that have so ill-treated your fellow-citizens at Paris on the 10th of August." Notwithstanding the praises bestowed on them for their forbearance by a most respectable and well-informed nobleman in the House of Lords, I have strong reasons to assert, that it was their inclination to have complied with his recommendation; but under such an unqualified manifesto, good policy and self-preservation forbade them to accede thereto, as the wisdom of their answer fully manifested: if Mr. Pitt meant to succeed with them, he ought to have said, "We will guaranty your sovereignties; we will pay your troops and feed them; we will furnish what may be wanting for the well-appointedment of your armies; to keep your militia in countenance, you shall be joined by twenty or five and twenty thousand infantry, and ten or fifteen thousand cavalry;" besides, the using other *persuasive* and *coercive* means which were in his power, by which he most certainly would have accomplished his ends. So much for his politics respecting that great object, which, with many other circumstances, have induced me to believe, that whenever he stepped beyond the channel, he played the school-boy. Whether, for the good of man-



mankind, it is not better as it is, I leave to the mature reflections of my readers.

Such mischief and embarrassment as this country now experiences being evidently brought upon us by this administration, whether it be through their *wickedness* or *imbecility*, or through *accidents* beyond the foresight of human penetration, the fact is not the less true, nor are the difficulties and the load we bear in consequence the lighter. No. What are then the reasons that they still hold the reins of government so fast? The very same that caused them to enter into this unjust, miserable, and impolitic war—*Love of power and self-interest.*

Though I am partial to them as private men, I really now begin to think that they would place the fate of the nation on the cast of a die rather than recede. But will they continue to be supported by the members of Parliament? I am afraid, long enough to make our calamities irretrievable. Why so? There are in both Houses of Parliament, people of education, knowledge, and understanding, that have both honours and fortunes at stake as well as we: granted; but let me tell you, that there is a very small portion of *common sense* in our natural composition, and that too often absorbed by our passions, our self-interest, our pride, and our vanity; these often prevent our acknowledging a trifling error in private life; and  
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when we remember, with what *imperiousness* that set of men bore down every one that differed in political opinion with them, we must not be surprised at the backwardness they feel to *read* their *recantation*.

Mr. Pitt and his coadjutors had the address to succeed in making themselves looked upon as the constitution itself; so that a man who dared to oppose or speak against any one of their *follies*, was immediately stigmatized with the opprobrious appellation of *Jacobin*, and looked upon as a dangerous man; by this he set the father against the son, the brother against the brother, the friend against the friend, and thereby almost destroyed the bonds of society. It answered to him all the purposes he had in view, the principal of which were, 1st, to silence the most reasonable part of the people, in which he found little or no difficulty, they being always the most moderate; the other, and the most important to him was, to render odious to this country that opposition which he afterwards found means to dismember by his stratagems. Let the private principles of the men who now compose that opposition be what they may, it will for ever be remembered with gratitude, that, like patriotic heroes, they stemmed the torrent of opinion and power, in favour of common sense, against all the successive encroachments on the liberty of the people, with the most undaunted courage and per-



perseverance; for which, to the astonishment of all the Continent, they still labour under the clouds of popular *prejudices*; and low indeed must they be reduced in the public opinion, when even *the plain man* condescends to regret their insignificance.

It is necessary, before I go farther, most solemnly to declare, that I do not, nor never did, belong to any political society or party; nor do I know one member of the opposition intimately; though there are a few (and much to my regret, but a few) with whom I have a very slight acquaintance; while, on the other side, I have many friends whom I sincerely love and respect: so that had I, or did I study my *private* interest, or court the approbation of the *great*, I have as good an opportunity as any one. No—my attachment to my country and its constitution is paramount to all personal views; and I am sorry to say, that for some time past, I have observed that constitution hastening to, and *now* arrived at the most imminent danger, which I cannot but contemplate with heart-felt, though perhaps, unavailing sorrow.

The fine periods of the *plain man*, and the manner in which they are dressed and arranged, evidently shew that he is a professional writer, and he is probably accustomed to employ his pen for those who pay him best; for all his declamation tends to the original system, of vilifying the ruined

remains of one party, for the advantage of the other, as some architects might be found who would depreciate the fragments of the colosseum, in order to establish the credit of a fantastical and flimsy structure of modern taste. For which purpose he tells his countrymen to continue their trust and confidence in the present administration, who have brought their country to this *unexampled degree of glory and prosperity*; and without even an attempt at comforting our minds with a probable reason for expecting ultimate success, he tells us again, that we must continue the war; and that those who dare *croak* at the times, are either *fools, bad men*, or on the eve of becoming *bankrupts*. Not to say worse, there is an *official impudence* in these assertions, at which a liberal and candid mind revolts.

I shall, however, make bold to tell him; that from the beginning, there have been men of the highest respectability, intelligence, and honesty, who have uniformly reprobated this war and its principles; that they do not come absolutely under the first of his epithets, the events it has produced, fully prove; as to the second, it is enough to say, that their hearts and consciences appear perfectly calm and tranquil; and as to his last assertion, for his own sake and that of the public, it is to be hoped that he possesses the same very ample means of comfort that a very great number of them do;



he will then have the credit of independence, and will not for hire have prostituted his brilliant talents to so bad a purpose, as I think that is in which he has employed them. However, as Mr. Pitt himself also begins now to *croak*, I should be glad to know under which of the above three heads his *qualifications* have placed him, in this gentleman's estimation. The *plain man* attempts to justify the minister's going to war upon those romantic decrees of the French, which, he says, threatened the subversion of the order of all society, and all the governments of Europe: but he forgets to tell you, that they are all of a date subsequent to the French being attacked; and to their being provoked by the *famous Brunswick manifesto*: for it must be acknowledged, that they left no means untried to prevent the first breaking out of hostilities; and on fair ground, every man must allow, that it was high time for them to sharpen their warlike weapons, unless they meant tamely to submit themselves to the most cruel resentment of their enemies, avowed so *publicly*, and with so little policy.

He labours to represent the present administration, as the *only* men in this kingdom fit to govern. I am astonished that such an opinion should have been so prevalent in a country like this, the seat of all kinds of learning, where every one has the right, and has been accustomed to discourse freely on all political and public affairs, and where the

people at large have more information, and a better education than in any other country on earth. To be thus *put to the shift*, is an humiliating idea indeed! I do think otherwise; and I feel myself proud in the conviction, that there are thousands (without disparity to the present ministers) *fitter* to govern than they are, until they have courage and magnanimity enough to acknowledge their mistakes, and change their pernicious measures.

I am not one of those that think the wonderful eloquence of Messrs. Pitt and Fox an indispensable requisite for a good minister. On the contrary, I think it has done infinite mischief. I should wish the prime minister to be mute, except when called upon to give necessary information to the House, in their deliberations. Plain truth itself is eloquence sufficient, and wants no other garb. For that situation, we now want plain sense and honesty only; indeed, these are qualifications we might expect now from every part of the community, even from the present ministers and their supporters; because, unless they calculate very wrong, every thing that is dear to them is in imminent danger. These are not ordinary times, where a man can serve his interest, and gratify his vanity and ambition at the expense of the state, without a material and perceptible injury to it. No individual can now separate his private from public interest without contributing to the increase of its



embarrassments, and advancing his own personal ruin : upon this is founded the right we have to expect a very sudden change of political measures : if not, let the men now in power be dismissed from their exalted seats ; it will, it must be so ! unless Providence has doomed this once happy land to total destruction.

The monstrous coalition that was at first formed against France could not be expected to last long, from the opposite interests of its component parts. And as many wise men foretold, we have seen them make their peace one after another with the French, even to the Elector of Hanover. The King of Prussia who has been so much abused for his dereliction, has proved himself the *wisest* and *most prudent* amongst them. For the system of partition that manifested itself at the taking of Valenciennes alarmed him as much as it did our cabinet, which produced the unsuccessful expedition of Dunkirk. But to him, that system was of much greater importance than to us ; for, instead of lending his arms for the aggrandisement of the House of Austria, it has been long since the unremitting care of the cabinet of Prussia to lessen it, and the king well knows, that his rank among the princes of the north depends on the integrity and political existence of France.

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Here I feel an inclination to throw out a few hints on our relative interest in regard to continental powers, that may perhaps be worth consideration. This country is perfectly independent of them; but they depend on us, as being tributary to our commerce. The armed neutrality during the American war has fully evinced their hatred and jealousy of our empire of the seas. The late Catharine had it engraved in bronze, and has bequeathed it to the whole continental cabinet. What has she done towards the performance of her engagements in this war? She has sent her fleets to our maritime school, and her ships to be refitted in our ports. Therefore let us take care not to second their wishes in lessening or impairing it. From this system *against* us, I do not even exclude our faithful ally the Emperor of Germany.

They well know, and we ought to know ourselves, that the English empire is a mighty giant, that nothing can destroy but itself, and we are unfortunately falling into the snare! Considering the situation of the Emperor, I am not surprised to see him continue the war as long as we are complaisant enough to send him plenty of our gold and silver. It forwards the mighty giant's fall, which would be for them the joyful cause of jubilee for ever! We ought not to be any longer deceived, for the Emperor can make peace whenever he pleases, and by arrangements in *his* hands that will



will give him the same political strength and extent of territory as he possessed before the beginning of the war. However, whether he makes peace before or after us, we shall find ourselves ultimately the paymasters of this costly war. Of the shattered remains of the coalition against France, I even presume to say, that it would not be unwise for us to get out of it first. Here I hear the ministers and friends of alarm cry out, shame ! shame on you ! would you then have this country commit such a breach of faith, against our faithful and persevering ally the Emperor ? I say, yes : because he began the war first, and self-preservation is the first law of nature : besides, I find no where in the political grammar, that *equity* and *policy* are synonymous terms ; neither do I find in my little reading of diplomatic history, that treaties have often lasted longer than it was perfectly convenient to each of the contracting parties. I beg not to be understood as speaking here of what *ought* to be ; but experience shows us that the *political moral* of princes is such, as to give each other measure for measure. If I have formed a right opinion of Mr. Hammond's mission to Vienna, Mr. Pitt has already deferred too long to manifest a real inclination for peace, to expect that the French will treat with him now in any other way than separately.

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Upon what ground does the *plain man* encourage you to come forward with your last resources, for the prosecution of this war? Does he tell you what specific object you are to attain by it? No.—You have only his bare assertion that every thing will end well. I have as high an opinion of the resources of this country as he may have, and perhaps I understand them better than he does; but I am well persuaded that they are not more than sufficient to face the exigences of our present situation, were we to revert to our peace establishment to-morrow. It does not require any extraordinary skill in calculation to find out, that when we shall have exhausted our remaining resources, we shall have none left. In short, let us not wait till that melancholy period arrives; the wounds of our country require immediate application of a remedy.

Nothing is so dangerous for any country, but more especially for a commercial one, as a breach of public credit; its pernicious effects being of a much longer duration than we seem to be aware of. The misfortunes of France originated more from that cause than any other; for had France never forfeited it, Lewis XVI. would not have seen himself under the necessity of taking a foreigner for his minister of finances, only because Mr. Necker had more personal credit than the state itself: and he actually procured large sums on his own credit  
(besides



(besides the money he advanced out of his own coffers) which had been refused to his predecessors, though on national responsibility. Let us therefore take the hint, and beware not to commit the same folly and injustice. For, notwithstanding the fond and mistaken idea that has lately crept into the minds of many of the landholders, the evil consequences of a derangement of finances in this country, or, as they say, a *spunging* of the national debt, would produce consequences dreadful beyond the calculation of human wisdom.

The *plain man* spends a great deal of his time in panegyrics on Mr. Pitt, for having at different times in some measure palliated the threatening evils that he had himself created. To sooth our minds, he also lays a great stress on our negative success. This is a new term in politics that we know originated in deranged brains! though he takes great pains to explain it, and supposes it not understood, we all know that he who plays at cards, and neither wins nor loses, has negative success. Will any man in his senses say that we are in a similar situation? Should we not be more justly compared to some modern Nimrod, who, after exhausting his fortune in his stables and his kennels, should comfort himself, that "if he has taken few foxes, he has, at least, not broke his own neck?" It is true, we have made some conquests, and I will allow the *plain man* to add to them

Mexico and Peru; I will yet affirm, that, could it be accomplished, even the present ministers would willingly forego them all, to see their country exactly in the same situation it was in before the commencement of the war. For the conquest of the whole continent would not counterbalance the debt we have incurred on the occasion.

I have here to deplore the first idea of the funding system, which has certainly made the stability of empires, and the peace and tranquillity of mankind, of a much more precarious tenure. There is a line of demarkation in the resources of a state as there is in those of an individual; only that it is more easily found out and calculated for one than for the other. But I make no difficulty in saying, that the late event of the bank, the manifest interference of our government in its transactions, and the bill now pending in parliament in consequence thereof, are strong symptoms that, if we do not soon put an end to the profligacy in the management of public money, we are in imminent danger of overleaping it.

Reflecting on the negative successes of the *plain man*, whether in finance or in territory, I find them no where but in his wild imagination, which would establish them on this retrospective point of view, that we should otherwise have been in a state of revolution, a republic, or perhaps a province



vince of France; nay, all Europe in a state of confusion. I must acknowledge, if he meant to continue the *alarm*, I expected more from his sagacity: for though the mind may be frightened at impending evils, ever so ill grounded or improbable, it soon forgets and even laughs at those which are past. Have we completely ruined France? Have we protected our allies, the Dutch? Have we prevented the navigation of the Scheldt? Have we protected our ally, the King of Sardinia, whose states we guaranteed? Have we kept the French within their ancient limits? Have we restored them to monarchy? Have we modelled their opinion on liberty, according to our wishes? Have we taught them to worship God, according to the modes we thought right?—Surely not. Not one object that could be perceived behind the mysterious veil that has covered our minister's purposes in this war have we obtained. I must grant to him, that we have crippled the navy of France; but, had they not been attacked, the gigantic resources and power that they have astonished the world with would have remained perfectly unknown, even to themselves; and it is more than probable, that the consequences of such a revolution would have been the total neglect of their commerce, of their manufactures, and of their navy; and we should most likely have accomplished, without the loss of

a guinea or a man, what we have pursued in vain with so ruinous a perseverance.

The *plain man* wishes us also to agree with him, that there has been no favourable period during this war in which we could have treated with any degree of security, making use of the old cant phrase, "who were we to treat with?" With those, to be sure, that could resist our power, and that of all Europe combined. Who did we treat with when we treated with America? With rebels to the state. Who do we treat with when we treat with Algiers, Tunis, or Tripoli? With common robbers and pirates, whose governments offer no more stability than France did at the time alluded to: for I doubt whether the *plain man* could find an underwriter in London who would, for twenty-four hours, insure the life of any of their deys, at any premium. Indeed, to come nearer home, if I may be permitted the observation, seldom a week passes in which some one does not, for his safety, treat even with a highwayman.

The whole fact is plainly this, that our ministers, either through imprudence or want of penetration and talents that would enable them to calculate the consequences of such a war, have unfortunately entered into it, and the difficulties of it have so rapidly succeeded each other, that even they have often shared in the feelings of the many  
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for the embarrassment of the state; and one almost feels disposed to forgive them the past, provided they would come forward, and with a noble manly spirit earnestly set about making peace: but they ought to be told, that if they mean to succeed, they must leave off their indirect and crooked policy, and present themselves with openness and candour, like men representing a great and powerful nation, and who sincerely wish to restore peace and all its blessings to mankind. It is an absurd and too humiliating an idea to say, that the French will not make peace with us. I have substantial reasons to believe that they want it, and that they also wish it as much as we ought to do. But they will have such a peace as the situation of their affairs warrants them to expect from the aggressors. Have we a right to more? Have we the prospect of forcing them to yield more according to our dictates? Indeed, I am afraid not! And I tremble at a contrary opinion still existing in our cabinet. We should tell the French, that we will treat with them on fair ground, and without any more "*sine qua non*!" If, after having discussed our respective interests, it should appear that they wish our downfall, or to humiliate us, which I do not believe, then, and then only, will our administration be justified in straining all the sinews of the state: though they never will, by the present generation nor by their posterity, be forgiven for having led us to so dire an alternative.

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The spirit of party that offends me so much in the *plain man*, and in many other publications, prompts me once more to say, that I belong to no party; nor do I desire or expect any thing, either from those in, or those out of place, except peace, and a proper economy in the state.

We all remember the high, insolent, and opprobrious language our ministers and their adherents have held in their places, in both houses, against the French nation. It has had its effect, and has created a rooted inveteracy against the present ministers in the mind of that people and its governors, that will not be easily eradicated. It may be asked, ought private resentment against a few individuals to interfere with the respective interests of two great states? Certainly not. But when we consider that it pervades the whole nation, and that all men have their imperfections, we must never be surprised to see them mix in all their private and public transactions; and we should try, by a change of men, to ward off the consequences of it.

When lately abroad, I was long and intimately acquainted with men of high respectability, who were well informed of the temper and projects of the French Directory, who have assured me, and gave me unquestionable proofs, that it is determined, to the full extent of circumstances, to humiliate



miliate Mr. Pitt. Let us ask how is his humiliation to be separated from that of the country he governs? And it is their opinion also, that, on the contrary, should the French have to treat with a different set of men, they are ready to do so on most liberal and fair principles. That very idea, if built on a sure foundation, is a sufficient ground for a change of administration; for what have they done for their country, that we should sacrifice even the most trifling punctilio for their sake? nay, every thing should give way to our country's welfare; and had they an atom of regard for it, or their future reputation, long ere now they would of their own accord have quitted their places. The infatuation of some still cries out, Who have we to do better? The nation at large should answer, Who have we to do worse? And are there then no honest men in the state that are likely to do what the exigencies of the times require, but those who have almost ruined it? Fellow countrymen, I know, in common with you, that the right of changing ministers belongs to the crown: but I know also that the King wishes the general welfare as much as we do; but he is misinformed by the self-interested men that surround him. Let us then unite, and approach the throne with affection and truth: for our present situation loudly calls on every individual to put his civil existence into activity. However, let us remember to do so with the calmness and duty of faithful subjects,

subjects, as well as with the firmness of freemen, by a universal adoption of the petitioning spirit which is happily gone forth for peace and a change of administration. No man that possesses 20*l.* a year, either by inheritance or honest industry, can be indifferent to our present situation, and the prosperity of the state. Apathy on the present occasion is a crime, which your children, to the remotest generation, will call you to an account for: and consider well, that it is an imperious duty on you to scorn any temporary advantages or influence, contrary to your affection and duty to your country. Our constitution gives us that privilege, and, though some late acts of parliament in some measure militate against it, we still have liberty enough to express our sentiments collectively and legally to the King, and, I hope, with effect.

I congratulate you on the honour and patriotism of those members of both Houses who have already ranged themselves on your side. I have also heard of a party formed in the House of Commons, with a view to promote economy in the expenditure of public money, and to favour a speedy peace. I should wish, and I am impatient to see them come forward with an unqualified opposition to Mr. Pitt, until he acts up to, or sincerely favours their avowed object; otherwise I am much afraid that they will soon stand suspected of playing the part of the bats in the fable, who hovered over the battle  
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of birds and quadrupeds, to decide according to circumstances of victory, whether they should trust themselves in future to their wings or their feet.

Whether these few reflections, and this short statement of facts, produce a good effect or not, I feel a conscious satisfaction in having done thus much towards fulfilling the duty I owe to my country, because delays and delusion become every hour more and more dangerous, and the shifts that the ministers are put to in order to face the exigencies even of the present, a short time will unfold: to remedy the evil, we must have the courage to look it fully in the face; let our opinion and prejudices yield to facts, for fear of suddenly finding ourselves at the bottom of the precipice, on the tremulous brink of which we are now hovering.

I do not as yet despair of the national bark, but I feel uneasy to see her beating about in such an high gale, among so many rocks and shoals, under the management of an unskilful and obstinate pilot, who long since ought to have brought her into port. Her pilot must be changed; then we shall soon see her weather the storm, and, when arrived into harbour, we may set about repairing her, and shall then soon set her afloat again more strong and secure than ever.

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I have omitted a number of other facts and remarks, which, in my opinion, were not less interesting, because, not being much in the habit of writing, I have found a great difficulty in condensing what I meant to say in the compass of these few pages; and if the reader is not obliged to me for what he reads in them, I shall at least be sure of his thanks for the pains I have taken in curtailing them. But, should they in the least contribute to dispose the minds of my countrymen to the unanimous promotion of an immediate peace, it will much contribute to my happiness. I shall conclude them with a short and friendly advice to Mr. Pitt himself.

SIR,

THOUGH we shall have long to deplore the consequences of the war you so wantonly begun, you are sure to please your countrymen in the late disposition you have manifested towards putting an immediate end to it. But I am very much afraid that you have some hidden design of checking thereby the prevailing spirit that exists of addresses to the throne against you. I am warranted to suspect you by the manner in which you have proceeded, in a uniform deception ever since its beginning, by which you have completely forfeited our confidence, at least for the present. However, you have acquired, at our expense, a prodigious  
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fund of knowledge and experience, which, in future times, may perhaps prove of service to your country. But I am sorry to see that you seem determined to keep your place at all events, notwithstanding the advantages that would result to our pending negotiations from your retirement. I feel it my duty to entreat you, both for the sake of the public and for your own, to resign your situation. Such a personal sacrifice to your country's welfare would command, in the heart of a generous nation, forgiveness for the past, and a lasting sentiment of gratitude for such a mark of your patriotism; you would be hailed to the end of time the *Curtius* of Great Britain. Your talents are universally acknowledged, so that, should you have courage, magnanimity, and prudence enough to retire under the present circumstances, what you would lose in splendor would be amply compensated by general public esteem. Then, in your peaceable retirement, you would be blessed with an opportunity of calmly reflecting on the causes, incidents, and wonderful effects, of the mighty transactions of state which you have directed during these last five years. You would then find your mind so tempered and improved, that you would bless the day you got out of this whirlwind: and I will venture to say, that, independent of the immediate advantages that would result by it, our country might boast hereafter of having one of the most experienced statesmen, in good and adverse fortune,

fortune, that England ever saw, and she would probably be induced, at some distant period, to give you ample opportunity to make amends for the involuntary mischiefs you have brought upon us.

I am, Sir, Your's, &c.

**A real PLAIN MAN.**

April 20, 1797.

Great Britain. Your talents are universally acknowledged, to that should you have courage, magnanimity, and prudence enough to retire under the present circumstances, what you would lose in splendor would be amply compensated by general public esteem. Then, in your peaceable retirement, you would be filled with an opportunity of calmly reflecting on the causes, incidents, and wonderful effects, of the mighty transactions of state which you have directed during these last five years. You would then find your mind to be tempered and improved, that you would bless the day you got out of this whirlwind, and I will venture to say, that, independent of the immediate advantages that would result by its our country might have the benefit of having one of the most experienced statesmen in good and adverse fortune.







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